

BIG 12 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

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EZ**

**Uzoma Nwachukwu
(EZ) leads a talented
freshmen class into
conference play**



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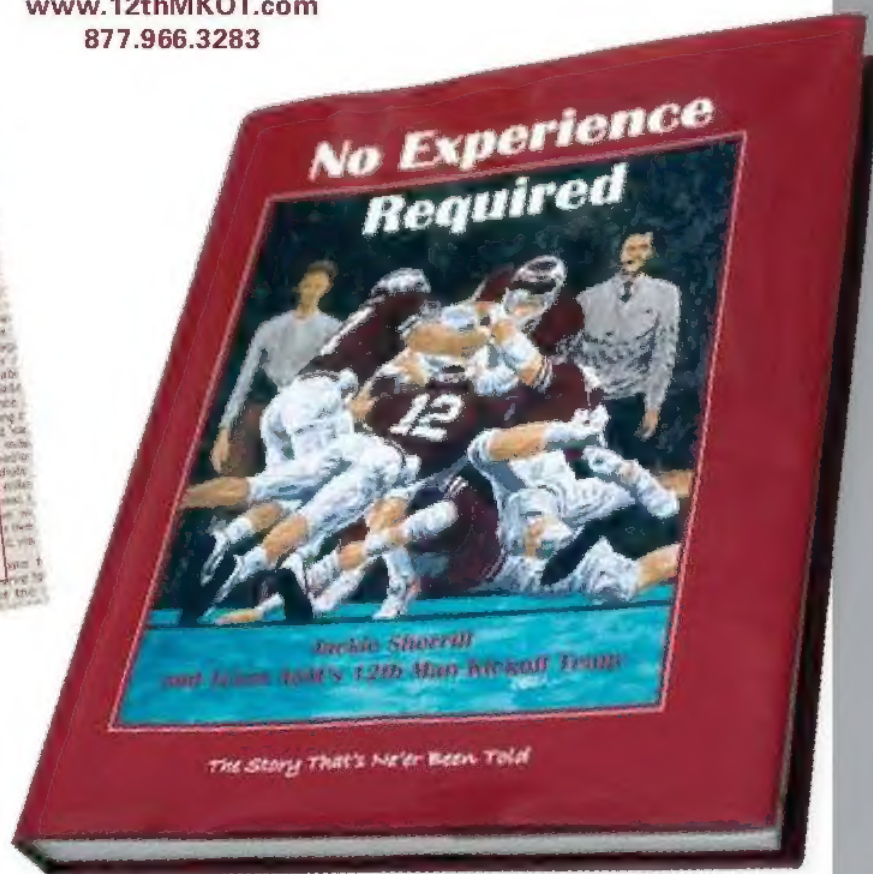
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On the Cover: Freshman WR Uzoma Nwachukwu (EZ) runs for his first of four touchdowns against Utah State. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

in every issue

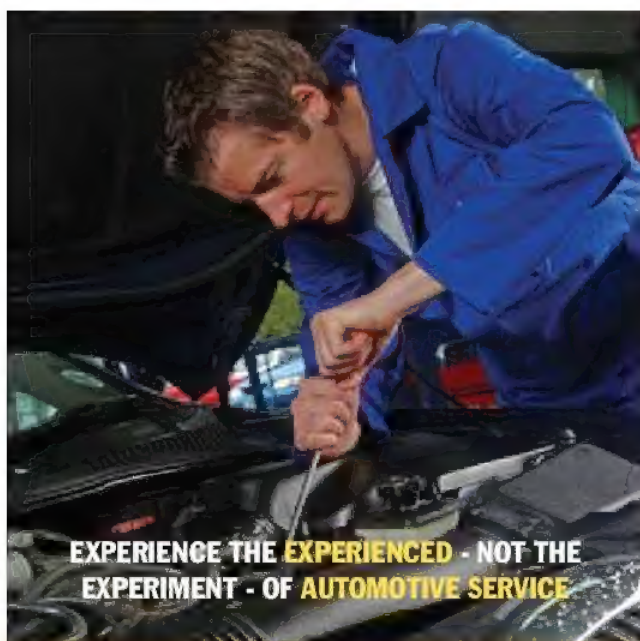
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Do you recognize the above photo from campus? Send an e-mail to photo@aggiemag.com and let us know where it was taken. Be the first to get it right and we'll send you a free copy of the book *Standing for America: The Spirit of Kyle Field*. Look for the answer in the next issue of AV. The photo in the September 09 issue was of the light fixtures in the MSC Flag Room – the last look at them until at least 2012.

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Howdy!

The buzz is back in Aggieland.

It began with the soccer team's impressive victories over two top ten opponents at home (see more soccer on page 19). The volleyball team followed up with a signature upset victory over perennial powerhouse Nebraska in Reed Arena (see more volleyball on page 16). However, with all the excitement those programs have generated, it's the football team's early success that has the town buzzing once more.

The Ags were expected to beat all of their opponents in September, so that part wasn't much of a surprise. It's the way in which they performed in the first three games that has Aggieland full of optimism. Although it remains to be seen if the team can have the same level of success against tougher competition, one thing is evident – Coach Sherman has given fans plenty of reasons to believe the program is finally back on the right track.

The 12th Man is hungry for a successful program that they can be proud of and rightfully so. Over the past ten years, positive moments have been few and far between in Aggie football. But it's hard not to get excited about the guys on this year's team. From veterans Jerrod Johnson and Von Miller to newcomers Uzoma Nwachukwu (E.Z.) and Christine Michael, this group just seems special and I can't wait to see where they take us (see more football on page 23).

Indeed the buzz is back, and hopefully it's here to stay.

Gig'em Ags!

Brian '01

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Aggieland

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Aggieland Illustrated is an independently owned, Aggie owned and operated publication and in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published eight times a year in the United States by Aggie Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome, but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggie Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

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Volume 4, Number 2

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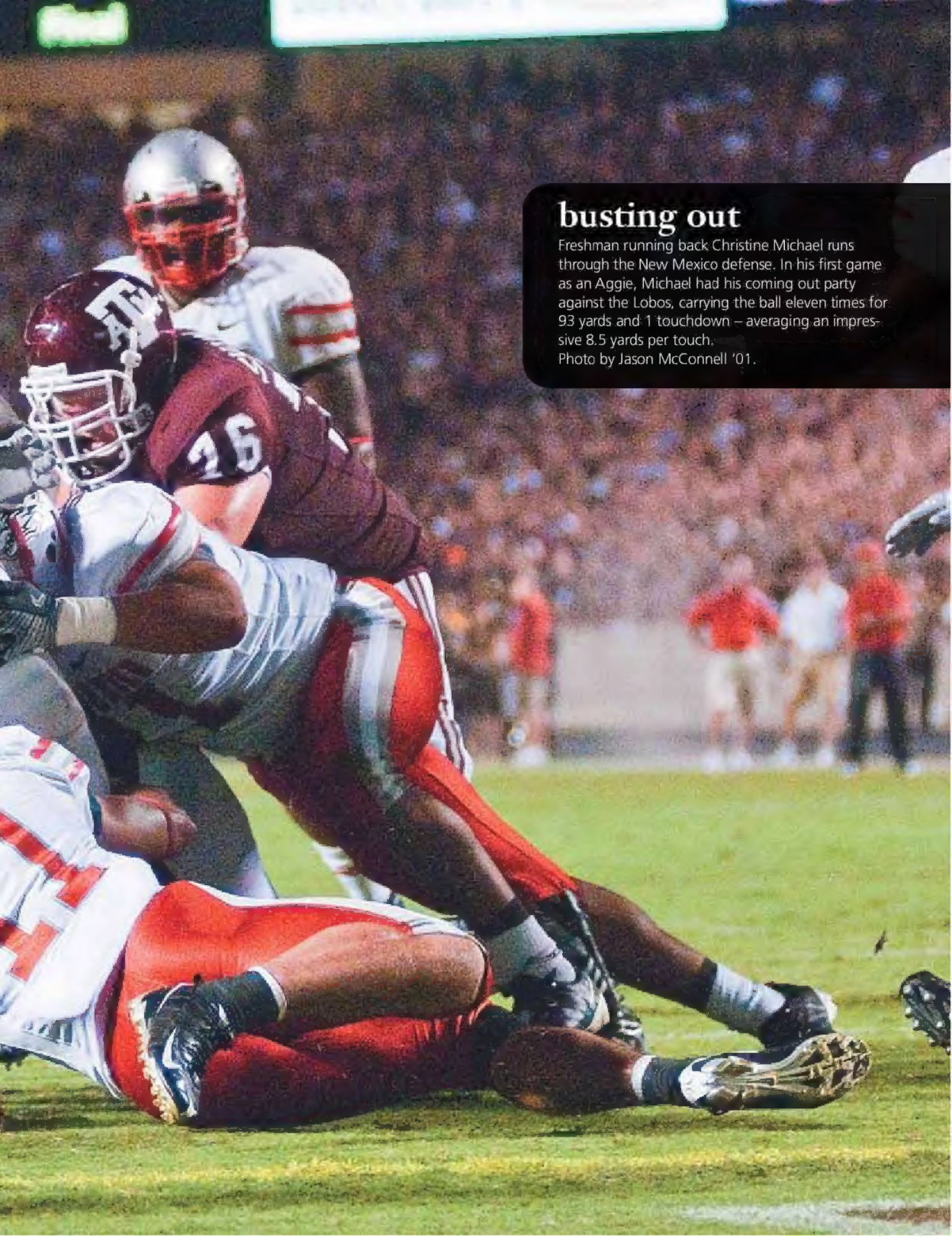
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busting out

Freshman running back Christine Michael runs through the New Mexico defense. In his first game as an Aggie, Michael had his coming out party against the Lobos, carrying the ball eleven times for 93 yards and 1 touchdown – averaging an impressive 8.5 yards per touch.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



snapshot

head shot

The Aggie defense converges on UAB running back Justin Brooks, knocking his helmet off in the process. Led by NCAA sack leader Von Miller, the A&M defense corralled the Blazers offense for a 56-19 route in the last of a three game season opening home stand.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



snapshot





creamed corn

The Aggie volleyball team jumps for joy after scoring the final point to upset the 6th ranked Cornhuskers 3-1, in a match that was nationally televised on ESPN. The signature win marked the first time A&M has defeated a No. 6-ranked team or higher since Dec. 7, 2001 – the last time A&M reached the Elite Eight. Photo by Brian Davis '01.

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SPECIAL VISIT
BY BENJAMIN KNOX

maroon&white recruiting



nate
ASKEW (WR)

"What caught my eye was that A&M has a pro style offense, a former NFL head coach and an offensive coordinator from the NFL."

remember the alamo

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

San Antonio typically isn't known for its football powerhouses. On occasion, a Smithson Valley or Converse Judson squad will emerge to challenge some of the state's top 5A programs such as Katy, Cedar Hill or Southlake Carroll, but usually to no avail. However, 2009 could be a year to remember for the Alamo city, thanks to an absolutely loaded San Antonio Madison football team.

The Mavericks feature no fewer than four elite prospects, including DB Tommie Saunders (verbally committed to Oklahoma State), LB Kris Catlin (Oklahoma State), WR Nate Askew (Texas A&M) and junior running back sensation Aaron Green (undecided). If Madison is able to finally break through the barrier and overcome some of the state's top programs, the aforementioned contingent of prospects will be leading the charge.

Though the Mavs tend to rely on their rushing attack to move the ball on offense, Askew is the primary weapon when they decide to air it out. As a junior, the future Aggie managed to compile 856 yards on just 51 receptions, hauling in 8 touchdowns along the way. Standing 6-4, weighing 200 lbs., boasting a sub-4.6 forty yard dash and blessed with the ability to leap through the ceiling, Askew is a true difference maker in every sense of the word. He is exactly the type of big wide receiver prospect that has become such a commodity in the collegiate and NFL ranks. In fact, Askew's NFL aspirations played a large role in his decision to commit to Texas A&M.

"What caught my eye was that A&M has a pro style offense, a former NFL head coach and an offensive coordinator from

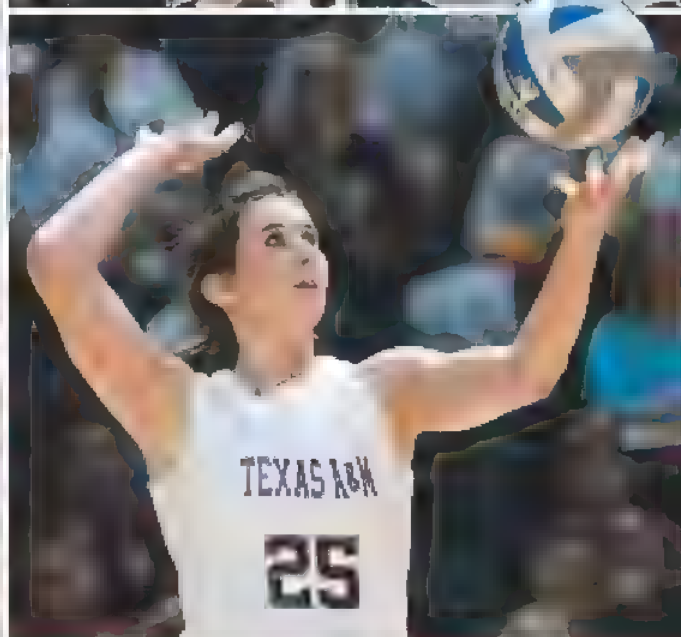
the NFL," Askew said in an interview with the *Maroon & White Report* at TexAgs.com. "I'm ready to learn from them because I know they'll get me to the pros. I know Coach Sherman is going to work and try his best, so I'm going to work together with him to have success at Texas A&M and beyond."

While the defensive duo of Catlin and Saunders are currently committed to Oklahoma State, both players have taken trips to Aggeland in hopes of picking up an A&M offer. The Aggies' current linebacker commits (Skyline's Corey Nelson and Dominique Patterson) each project to play on the outside, while Catlin mans the middle and has a nice combination of size, speed and instincts. Though it's difficult to project Saunders' position at the next level, there's no denying his nose for the football and his ability to punish ball carriers at the point of attack. The odds favor both players remaining firm in their pledges to the Cowboys, but it's worth keeping an eye on these two should the Ags decide to eventually make a move on either of them.

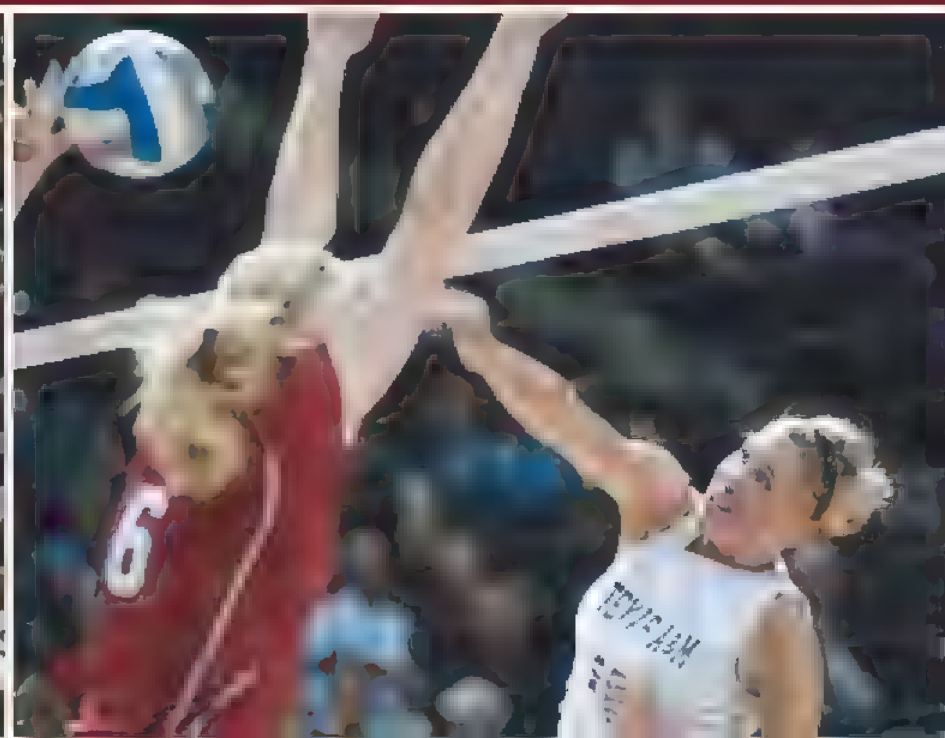
Next year, A&M will attempt to reel in Green, but will have to overcome the "who's who" of college football to earn his signature. Being good friends with Askew won't hurt, as the stud wideout plans to bring Green to Kyle Field with him at least once this season to take in an Aggie football game. But with an older brother playing at Nebraska and Mack Brown just 60 minutes down the road, A&M will have to put its best foot forward in order to land Green.

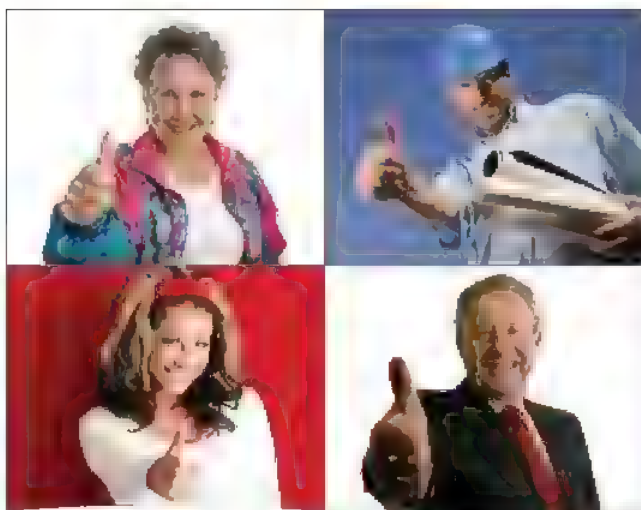
For now, the Ags are happy to have their foot in the door and can't wait to see what Askew can do in maroon and white. **AW**

For complete coverage of Texas A&M recruiting, contact Billy Liucd of the *Maroon & White Report* at (979) 690-7361 or by visiting www.texags.com



Going into this season, the Aggie volleyball team knew that they had to do whatever it would take to put an end to their NCAA Tournament drought. Their records the past few seasons were good enough to earn an invitation, but they could never claim a signature win over a top program to seal the deal. However, only two games into conference play, the Aggies came out and snagged a signature win over perennial power Nebraska. While there's still a long volleyball season to be played before the selection committee convenes, the chances of a postseason invite to A&M definitely got a shot in the arm.





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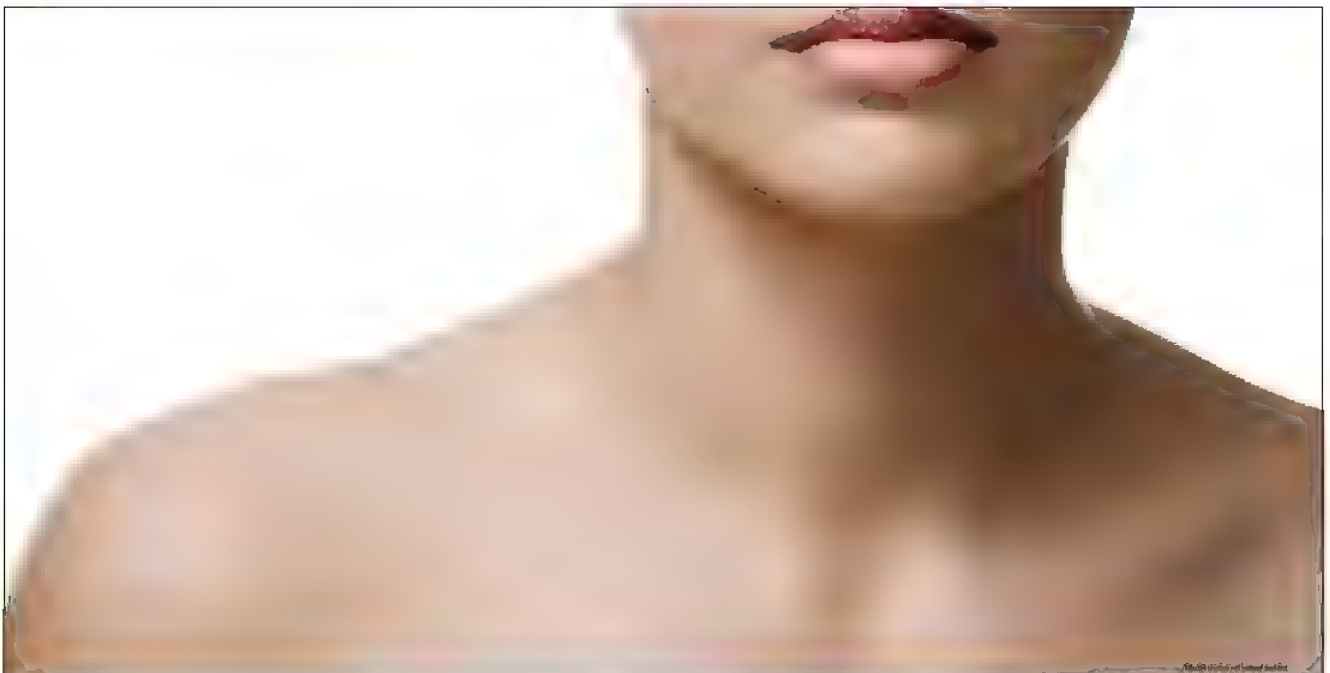


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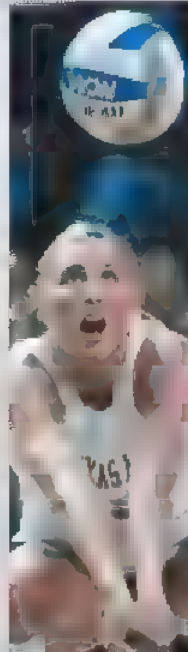
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The soccer team has had its ups and downs already in 2009, which isn't too much of a surprise considering that they are playing one of the toughest schedules in the nation. In non-conference action, the Aggies lost on the road to then No. 1 California and top-ranked North Carolina. At home, however, the team dominated then No. 8 USC and then 2nd-ranked Portland. Playing the best teams this early in the season will undoubtedly benefit the Aggies when it's postseason time.



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4 8 Missouri 4 pm			7 8 Kansas State 6:30 pm		8 @Tar Heel w Invitational All Day 8 @Oklahoma State 7 pm	9 @Tar Heel w Invitational All Day 8 Oklahoma State 11:30 am @Baylor 7 pm	
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18 @Lone Star m Champ. All Day 8 @Nebraska 1 pm		19 @Lone Star m Champ All Day	20 8 Oklahoma 7 pm	21		23 8 Colorado 7 pm @Southwest m Collegiate Plunge 7 pm	24 @Texas Tech TBA @Southwest m Collegiate Plunge 12 pm
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@Challenge at w Onion Creek All Day		@Challenge at w Onion Creek All Day		8 @Big 12 Champs. TBA @Kansas State 7 pm		8 @Big 12 Champs. TBA Texas A&M-Commerce (exhibition) 7 pm @Kansas State TBA	8 @Big 12 Champs TBA @Colorado TBA @Oklahoma State 10 am Baylor 5:30 pm

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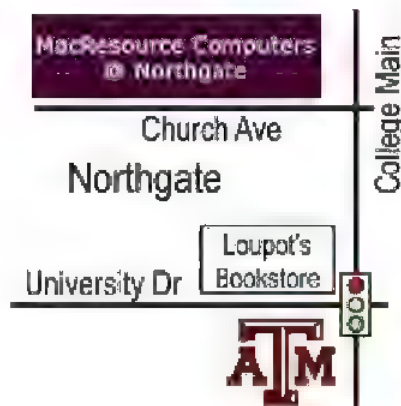


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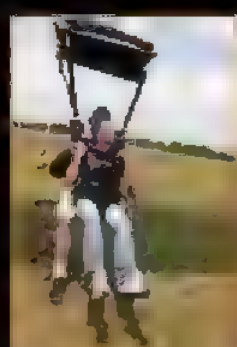
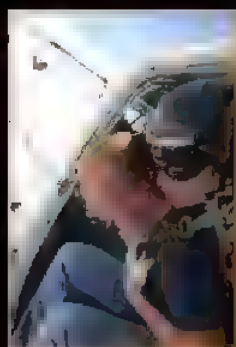
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Non-Conference Football Rewind

A look back at the non-conference highlights and Q&As with seniors Michael Shumard and Jordan Pugh BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

(right) True freshman WR Uzoma Nwachukwu (EZ) celebrates with senior WR Howard Morrow after scoring a touchdown against Utah State. EZ had a record setting game with four touchdowns against the Aggies on only four touches—three by air and another by ground. (below) Junior QB Jerrod Johnson runs in for the touchdown in the first half against UAB. Johnson torched the Blazers for 290 passing yards and 351 yards of total offense. He became the first Aggie quarterback to rush for three touchdowns and pass for three touchdowns in a game in school history.





jordan PUGH



Seventeen questions for the Aggies' senior safety

What is the biggest difference between this year's defense and last year's?

The first things that come to mind are speed and youth. We have a lot of young guys who are growing and learning as they go. There's also a different attitude. When bad things happen in the game, nobody freaks out unlike last year. Instead, the focus is on what we need to do to get it fixed.

What is your goal this year?

I just want to be the leader that I've been called on to be. I was always taught that you have to learn how to follow before you can lead. As a senior, I think it's my time now to lead this defense in the right direction.

How many times have you changed positions between cornerback and safety since you've been here?

I think it's been about every week. If I could just stay in one spot I would be happy. It's good though because I know what everyone is going through. It makes you adaptable to anything.

What other position would you play if you had the choice?

Linebacker. It seems like they just run around hitting people. That would be a lot of fun.

Who are the most difficult receivers to cover on the Aggie offense?

Jeff Fuller, EZ (Uzoma Nwachukwu) and surprisingly Ryan Tannehill.

(above) Sophomore LB Garrick Williams provides the big hit on New Mexico WR Roland Bruno. The Aggie defense was solid in the 2009 season opener, limiting the Lobos offense to 6 points and 231 total yards. (right) Sophomore RB Cyrus Gray breaks away from the UAB defense for a touchdown in the 4th quarter. Gray received the lion's share of carries in Christine Michael's absence due to injury and responded with 99 yards and one touchdown on 19 carries. (facing page) Sophomore WR Jeff Fuller makes the great catch with outstretched arms for the touchdown against New Mexico. Fuller caught a career-high 10 passes for a career best 111 yards and one touchdown. Unfortunately he broke his right fibula in the following game against Utah State and will be out of action until sometime during the Big 12 schedule.



Would you rather have a big, fumble-causing hit or an interception?

You always want the ball. Then again, there's nothing like getting that hit. Have to take the interception though.

What is your favorite thing about being an Aggie?

Being united with the Aggie community and the Aggie Network. That's what made me want to come to Texas A&M. When I saw how the Aggie Network worked, I knew I wanted to be a part of it.

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be Wolverine. I was a huge X-Men fan as a kid and Wolverine was my man. I was Wolverine for every Halloween.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I like to think I can sing. I'm not any good at it, but I can sing. That's a talent.

What's your favorite meal?

I was born in Cincinnati, and there's a place there called Skyline Chili. They make this spaghetti chili. It's not the type of chili that people think of around here. You get that and put a bunch of cheese on it and some crackers, promise, that's the best food I've ever had.

Have you been back for some more?

My mom made some a few weeks ago.

If you could play a different college sport, what would you play?

That's easy—basketball. It's a nice air-conditioned sport. Sometimes when I'm out at practice during two-a-days in the 120-degree heat, I ask myself why in the world I decided to play football. The basketball players are over there just chilling around in the A/C.

Do you have any phobias?

I used to be afraid of elevators. Then one day I was tired of going up and down the steps and decided the elevator was a pretty good invention. So I broke that phobia.

What are your nicknames?

Everybody calls me "Old Man" or "Pugh Head." I don't know where they got "Pugh Head" from.

How does it feel to be the "old man" in the secondary?

It's bittersweet. I always tell the freshmen that they are coming in at the perfect time and it makes me a little jealous. The four years I've been here have been filled with a lot of drama. They're coming in at the perfect time—right on the rise. Being my last year, I want to spark that rise and go out with a bang.

What's your favorite Aggie tradition?

Love singing the Spirit of Aggie and with the 12th Man right before the game.

How do you want to be remembered?

I want to be remembered as a guy who played hard and who did the right way. And I want to be remembered as a guy who sparked the return of Texas A&M's tradition of winning. **TM**



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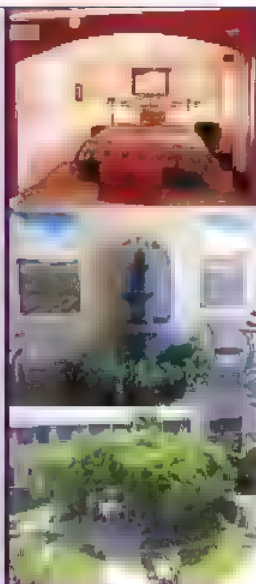


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michael SHUMARD



Nine questions for the Aggies' senior offensive lineman

How does it feel when the ball is snapped and it's time to go hit somebody?

It's a great feeling to finally get out of your stance and get going. Most of the time it's just doing your job and people never notice. I can knock somebody clear out of their teeth, their earpiece and mouthpiece could fly out and not could be coming out of their nose, but nobody notices because the ball isn't anywhere near you. It's more of a personal enjoyment.

What is the most rewarding moment for you on the field?

I enjoy watching my teammates score. I take the excitement in their face and the excitement from the fans as excitement for me because I helped set that score up. When they come over and we do a little whirly bird, a butt bump or a high five, that makes me feel special.

What's your favorite play to run on offense?

We run a power play where the guard gets to pull up inside and the line backer is sitting there on an island and he either has to take you on or run himself out of the play. Most of the time, he's not a sissy and tries to take you on. It's fun when we're watching film the next day and you see his head snap backwards. That is very rewarding and I enjoy it a lot.

What do you like to do for fun?

I really enjoy hunting and fishing. I'm a big outdoors person. I've also recently taken up golf, which is very amusing to watch. I'm really terrible, but it's a good reason to be outside.

What's your best round so far?

I broke 90 once. I think I had an 88. I was really happy about that. It was a one-time deal though. The putts were just falling. I was hitting shots off trees and they were bouncing the right way. On a par 3, I hit a sprinkler hole and it bounced to a foot from the hole. I was having such a lucky day. There was no change in skill. Don't worry.

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I went through a lot of phases. I wanted to be a coach at one point and also a veterinarian. I've never really told anybody this, but I was always very proud that my dad served in the army, and although he never really wanted me to do that, if I hadn't gotten a college scholarship, I would have lost some weight and tried to follow in his footsteps. I was very proud of him.

Do you cook?

I grill and I bake, but I don't cook. I can bake cakes and brownies and stuff like that, of course, because I'm a fat kid. And I can grill or make something easy like spaghetti. But if you asked me to make chicken tartar or some crap like that, you'd have a better chance of winning the lottery.

What do you want to be remembered for when your career at A&M is over?

That I was selfless. Coach Sherman asked me to play tackle last year because we didn't have anyone there. It wasn't something I was very good at by my standards, but it was what we had to do to give us the best opportunity to win. I caught a lot of crap last year and a lot of bad stuff happened. I didn't play up to my standards and took a lot of heat for that. It wasn't because I wasn't trying hard. I did whatever I could to help the team and the fans. That is more important to me than my happiness.

What's your favorite Aggie tradition?

I like it when the 12th Man saws varsity's horns off. When I'm on the field and sucking water between quarters and they do that, it always gives me a little tingle down my spine. I look forward to it. When there's a few seconds left on the clock and I know we are not going to run another play, start to look up to the fans and watch them get ready. Truly enjoy that.

View the full Q&A on aggielandillustrated.com >> NAME: shumard >> PASSWORD: selfless



(above) WR Jzoma Nwachukwu (EZ) skies above the Utah State defensive backs for an incredible touchdown reception (right) Junior Von Miller explodes through the line to sack QB Ryan Mallett on Arkansas' first offensive series. The national sack leader was limited to the one sack for the game, bringing his total to nine for the season through the first four contests (top right) Sophomore QB Ryan Tannehill makes the touchdown grab in the corner of the end zone during the second half against the Razorbacks



BAYLOR BEARS

LAST SEASON: 4-8 (2-6 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Art Briles (2nd Season, 4-8 at Baylor)

WHO TO WATCH:

WR Kendall Wright

50 receptions, 649 yards, 5 TD's in 2008

LB Joe Pawelek

128 tackles, 6 TFL, 6 Int's, 2 fumble recoveries in 2008

AT A GLANCE:

The Bears entered the 2009 season ranked 25th in the preseason poll. Senior QB Ryan Orton, who was a first-team All-American last season, is expected to lead the offense. Orton's ability to create the big play is one of the keys to the Bears' success. On defense, the Bears appear to have stockpiled enough talent to surprise some of the Big 12. RB Jay Finley, who rushed for 1,000 yards last season, and WR Kendall Wright are the key players on offense. LB Joe Pawelek is the key player on defense.

AI'S PREDICTION:

Aggs 49, Bears 24

OKLAHOMA SOONERS

LAST SEASON: 12-2 (7-1 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Bob Stoops (11th Season, 110-23 at Oklahoma)

WHO TO WATCH:

QB Sam Bradford

328 completions, 4,720 yards, 50 TD's in 2008

LB Travis Lewis

143 tackles, 11 TFL, 3 sacks, 4 Int's in 2008

AT A GLANCE:

The Sooners entered the 2009 season ranked 1st in the preseason poll. Senior QB Sam Bradford, who was a first-team All-American last season, is expected to lead the offense. Bradford's ability to create the big play is one of the keys to the Sooners' success. On defense, the Sooners appear to have stockpiled enough talent to surprise some of the Big 12. LB Travis Lewis is the key player on defense.

AI'S PREDICTION:

Aggs 45, Sooners 45



OKLAHOMA ST. COWBOYS

LAST SEASON: 9-4 (5-3 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Mike Gundy (5th Season, 27-23 at Oklahoma State)

WHO TO WATCH:

WR Dez Bryant

17 receptions, 1,480 yards, 19 TD's in 2008

LB Andre Sexton

100 tackles, 4 TFL, 1.5 sacks, 1 fumble recovery in 2008

AT A GLANCE:

The Cowboys entered the 2009 season ranked 10th in the preseason poll. Senior QB Zac Robinson leads a deadly offensive attack, as RB Kendall Hunter and Bryant are among the nation's best. The Cowboys return multiple starters on defense, including Sexton, LB Patrick Levine, CB Pernish Cox and DE Ugo Chi.

AI'S PREDICTION (OCTOBER 10 AT KYLE FIELD):

Could go either way, but OSU is likely to prevail in a close one. **Cowboys 35, Aggs 31**

TEXAS LONGHORNS

LAST SEASON: 12-1 (7-1 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Mack Brown (12th Season, 115-26 at Texas)

WHO TO WATCH:

QB Colt McCoy

32 completions, 3,859 yards, 34 passing TD's in 2008

DE Sergio Kindle

46 tackles, 19 TFL, 10.5 sacks in 2008

AT A GLANCE:

The Longhorns are riding high after their BCS victory over Ohio State last season and for good reason. The senior tandem of McCoy and WR Jordan Shipley will likely lead Mack Brown to yet another 10-win season, while another weak non-conference schedule should allow the 'Horns to ease into a BCS berth. Will Muschamp's defense received more hype than the Pope coming to town this offseason, and while it's been good so far, it hasn't come close to meeting expectations.

AI'S PREDICTION (NOVEMBER 26 AT KYLE FIELD):

Just depends on which way the ball bounces. **Horns 31, Aggs 24**



TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS

LAST SEASON: 11-2 (7-1 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Mike Leach (10th Season, 76-39 at Texas Tech)

WHO TO WATCH:

WR Detron Lewis

71 receptions, 869 yards, 10 TD's in 2008

LB Marion Williams

65 tackles, 31 TFL, 4 sacks, 1 fumble recovery in 2008

AT A GLANCE:

For the first time in what seems like forever, there's uncertainty in Lubbock. Record-breaking QB Graham Harrell and WR Michael Crabtree are gone, and Leach has to prove whether or not his Red Raider squad will have to rebuild or reload. After a season for the ages in Texas Tech got off to a rough start in 2009, losing two of their first four games. QB Taylor Potts will undoubtedly put up big numbers in Tech's pass-happy system, and Lewis looks like a sure thing.

and personal fouls) may have finally pushed Leach too far, as he was indefinitely suspended after the Red Raider loss in Houston. The defense will be the key to their success in 2009.

AI'S PREDICTION (OCTOBER 24 IN LUBBOCK, TEXAS):

Tough to ever predict a win in Lubbock, but hopefully we're wrong. **Tech 49, Aggs 41**



COLORADO BUFFALOES

LAST SEASON: 5-7 (2-6 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Dan Hawkins (4th Season, 13-24 at Colorado)

WHO TO WATCH:

QB Cody Hawkins (1,892 yards and 17 TD's in 2008)
LB Jeff Smart (109 tackles, 2 TFL in 2008)

AT A GLANCE:

For whatever reason, the former Boise State head coach hasn't been able to duplicate his success in Boulder. If the Buffaloes post another 2-6 record in Big 12 play this season, we suspect Dan Hawkins won't be around much longer. There aren't many bright spots for the Colorado squad, as Cody Hawkins' numbers at QB are well below Big 12 averages and highly touted sophomore RB Darrell Scott hasn't come near his lofty expectations. Smart continues to lead the team in tackles so far in 2009.

AI'S PREDICTION (NOVEMBER 7 IN BOULDER, COLORADO):

Despite a bad history playing in Boulder, this year is different...barely. **Aggs 28, Buffs 20**



IOWA STATE CYCLONES

LAST SEASON: 5-7 (2-6 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Paul Rhoads

WHO TO WATCH:

QB Austin Arnaud

DE Christopher Lyle

Paul Rhoads' Iowa State Cyclones have a chance to make a statement in the Big 12 this season. The Cyclones' offense, led by QB Austin Arnaud, has the potential to be one of the most explosive in the conference. On the defensive end, DE Christopher Lyle is a key player to watch. The Cyclones' defense is expected to be one of the best in the Big 12.

Aggs 45, Cyclones 17



KANSAS JAYHAWKS

LAST SEASON: 5-7 (2-6 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Mark Mangino (8th Season, 13-41 at Kansas)

WHO TO WATCH:

QB Todd Reesing

S Darrel Stuckey (98 tackles, 3 TFL)

AT A GLANCE:

The Jayhawks (or Fighting Mangino's) have got a lot of potential. The Jayhawks' offense, led by QB Todd Reesing, has the potential to be one of the most explosive in the conference. On the defensive end, S Darrel Stuckey is a key player to watch. The Jayhawks' defense is expected to be one of the best in the Big 12.

KANSAS ST. WILDCATS

LAST SEASON: 5-7 (2-6 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Bill Snyder (18th Season, 136-68-1 at Kansas State)

WHO TO WATCH:

WR Brandon Banks

DB Joshua Moore (76 tackles, 5 TFL, 3 Ints in 2008)

AT A GLANCE:

Bill Snyder's Kansas State Wildcats have a chance to reclaim the reigns of the Kansas State football program. The Wildcats' offense, led by WR Brandon Banks, has the potential to be one of the most explosive in the conference. On the defensive end, DB Joshua Moore is a key player to watch. The Wildcats' defense is expected to be one of the best in the Big 12.

Aggs 30, Wildcats 11



MISSOURI TIGERS

LAST SEASON: 10-4 (5-3 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Gary Pinkel (9th Season, 59-41 at Mizzou)

WHO TO WATCH:

RB Derrick Washington (1,036 yards, 17 TD's in 2008)

LB Sean Weatherspoon (155 tackles, 18 TFL in 2008)

AT A GLANCE:

Despite losing QB Chase Daniel and electric WR Jeremy Madin, the Tigers return as one of the Big 12 North's premier programs. Highly touted sophomore QB Blaine Gabbert's time has finally arrived to lead the Missouri offense, and the early returns were positive in non-conference play. The Tigers rely on the ground game to open up the passing attack, and Washington continues to handle that responsibility in stride. Defensively, Weatherspoon is an All American candidate and will find himself playing on Sundays next season.

AI'S PREDICTION:

The Aggies will play Missouri again at Kyle Field on October 16, 2010.



NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

LAST SEASON: 10-4 (5-3 in Big 12)

HEAD COACH:

Bo Schembechler

WHO TO WATCH:

RB Ryan Harris

DT Ndamukong Suh

Bo Schembechler's Nebraska Cornhuskers have a chance to make a statement in the Big 12 this season. The Cornhuskers' offense, led by RB Ryan Harris, has the potential to be one of the most explosive in the conference. On the defensive end, DT Ndamukong Suh is a key player to watch. The Cornhuskers' defense is expected to be one of the best in the Big 12.



briYOUNG

Ten questions for the Aggies' sophomore soccer sensation BY JASON MCCONNELL '01

What brought you to A&M?

Just the tradition. The coaching staff is great. The team is so close, I couldn't ask for a better setting when I am going out and playing on Friday nights.

Were you expecting to be a leader on this team as a freshman?

The coaches told me beforehand that I was going to step in with a big role on the team. I wasn't expecting to be one of the leading scorers, or start every game or play every minute of every game, but I couldn't have asked for a better freshman year. The entire freshman class had huge shoes to fill and we did it in a very classy way. Unfortunately, we didn't come away with any trophies or rings. It was a rebuilding year. But, if you get to the Elite 8 in a rebuilding year, everything is going to be alright.

When did you start playing soccer?

I started when I was 10 years old. I started right at competitive. My friend told me to come out and play soccer with her because she needed a friend and I didn't know anyone else out there. I actually made the national team based on pure athleticism. I pretty much sat the bench my first four years of soccer until one of my coaches stepped in and said "give her a chance at defense." That is where I have been ever since. I was a late bloomer compared to everyone else.

Did you play any other sports?

I played basketball and softball. My dad went to UCI and played baseball there. We grew up on baseball. I always told my dad I would be the first girl to play Major League Baseball, but I guess that didn't come true. I think I got a pretty good trade off right now though.

Do you have any superstitions?

I do the exact same thing before every game. I get the same meal at Jason's Deli, the Chicken Club Wrapping with extra cheese, no onions or tomatoes. It is pretty good. I come into the locker room at the same time before every game. I never put my shin guards on before I go out to the field because when I put my shin guards on I am strapped and ready to go. I don't tie my cleats until we start hitting long balls. That's when I really start to engage in the game. Then, Raven and I have to do our handshake before the whistle blows. Then it is game time.

What happens when the shoes are tied?

Once the shoes are tied it is tackle time.

Do you have any guilty pleasures?

I am the most unhealthy eater ever. Ever. Our nutritionist, Amy, is not going to be happy with me, but I cannot stand healthy food. I eat Coco Puffs, Pop Tarts, etc. I dumped a bunch of suckers in my locker. I can't go anywhere without eating candy. I could eat junk food all day every day. And I am addicted to Mountain Dew. It is probably my favorite thing ever.


What items do you have to take with you on the road?

This is going to sound funny, but my inhaler. I have the worst allergies on the face of the earth. I am allergic to everything. Mostly, I am allergic to grass so I cannot breathe without my inhaler. It has to be there when I am around. And my iPhone. I love it, I feel naked without it. It is the best. I can't get rid of it.

How does playing here compare to other places you've played?

Well, before playing at the college level, you have your parents on the sidelines and that's about it. You come out here and you have people who come out that respect you and love to see you play. When you score a goal, it is the most amazing feeling when those people are cheering for you. When the ball is on our half of the field, and everyone starts doing that "AAAA" all the time, it really pumps you up to keep it in there. No other team has that. It is a huge advantage for us.

What is your favorite Aggie tradition?

I love the Aggie War Hymn. No other school has anything like that. I love sawing it off. It is what I look forward to after every game. You get all the students together and it just shows the tradition of the 12th Man. The alumni here are amazing. The school is just a family of 48,000 people. I love it. 

View the full Q&A and photo shoot on aggielandillustrated.com >> NAME: young >> PASSWORD: candy

kelseyBLACK

Nine questions for the sophomore volleyball libero

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01

What brought you to A&M?

During my freshman year of high school, I came on a visit with a friend that used to play here—Beth Skypala. It was during Texas weekend and football and volleyball were playing. I had never wanted to come to A&M—didn't even want to come look—but I came anyway and as soon as I stepped on campus I didn't want to look anywhere else. I knew this is where I wanted to go. So you can imagine what my parents thought when I was 14 years old and already convinced where I was going to college. A week before my 15th birthday, I called Laurie (Corbelli) and asked her if I could come and play here. I loved all the tradition and how the women are all together. You are connected to everybody.

How did you feel to receive the most improved player award for season?

It was really exciting because it was voted on by the players and it showed their appreciation of me. I remember back to my first day of practice. I never really had to pass the ball in high school, so when the first day came to me, I thought "I was in perfect position and stuck my arms out. Next thing I know, the ball goes flying over my head like nothing you've ever seen before." I don't even know how it happened. From that point on, John was constantly on me about using the right technique. To go from not even being able to pass the ball inside the court, my first semester, to going out to play libero and be on the Junior National Team was a great accomplishment for me.

Did you ever played fibero (dorm) speciality for

Never. I wish I could go back one more year in a flash to my senior and that was it. I would be gone. I don't go back. It is hard my way of thinking. It was scary the first couple of games. I was thinking, "Gosh, gosh, gosh, gosh, gosh, gosh." I close my eyes and I can see it. When we had to go out there struggling at first, while trying to get the ball to make it. There we thinking, "Hey, come on. Hey, come on. Hey, come on." It was different, but I know it. I know it's made me a more confident player.

What do you do?

[illegible]

Do you have any hidden talents?

[illegible]

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17. **I have...guilt**

Pepper before every name

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

thing. I was 15 years old and it was, I felt, the only thing I would, but I got too tall. They said I was in the back row. I was 5' 9" and I was 5' 8".

What is your favorite Aggie tradition?

I love the "Sit Down Bus Driver" yell. When they yell it, I get excited and I can't stop laughing. I love Muster too.

View the full

ASSMORO: *Chorus*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

GEOFF HANGARTNER

BY STEVE HUNT

Former A&M offensive lineman Geoff Hangartner made a change of scenery in the offseason, signing a four-year, \$10-million contract with Buffalo. Hangartner, who started 36 consecutive games for the Aggies, began the 2009 season as the Bills' starting center.

"I felt like it was a great opportunity for me," he said. "In Carolina, I was a sometimes starter and a sixth man or backup at a bunch of positions. I ended up starting a lot of games but I felt like I was ready to be a full-time starter and that was the biggest opportunity I was looking for. I liked the way they were headed offensively. This just seemed like it would be the best fit."

The Bills' roster also includes fellow Aggie and o-lineman Seth McKinney.

"We talk A&M football a bunch," Hangartner said. "It's been really good having Seth around. We were roommates on the road my first two years at A&M, so we've known each other for a long time. We do a lot of trash talking about the Aggies. We also have a trainer who worked at A&M for a while, so between us, there's plenty of trash talk."

Hangartner still holds fond memories of his years in Aggieland.

"I loved my time at A&M," he said. "I couldn't have picked a better place to go to school and play football. The only unfortunate part when I was there was that we weren't all that good. We had some bowl seasons but never the kind of success that I expected when I went there and that we expected out of ourselves."

The passion of the fans is what Hangartner misses the most.

"The atmosphere of NFL games is great and we have great fans up here in Buffalo," he said, "but there's nothing like playing in Kyle Field in front of the student section with all the yells."

Hangartner starred at New Braunfels HS, helping lead the Unicorns to two state playoff appearances. As a senior, he was a first-team All-District choice and a second-team All-State selection. He grew up an Aggie, so he knew where he wanted to play in college if given the opportunity. It was an easy recruiting job for



"The atmosphere of NFL games is

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then-head coach R.C. Slocum.

After spending his first three years under Slocum, he played under Dennis Franchione as a senior. He admits the transition was tough.

"You've got two very different personalities as far as the coaches went," he admits. "Any time you have a coaching change, it's tough but when the personalities are that much different, it makes it a little tougher."

After a strong senior campaign where he earned first-team All-Big 12 Conference honors, Hangartner headed to the NFL. He admits when the Panthers took him in the fifth round of the 2005 draft, it was a surprise.

"I really hadn't had a whole lot of contact with them," he said. "I had contact with a lot of different teams and more contact with some other teams. I talked to one of their scouts at an all-star game and that was pretty much the only contact I had with them. That was a little bit

of a surprise. I was happy to be drafted and to go to Carolina."

Even though he never became a full-time starter with the Panthers, he still relishes his time there.

"I made some great friends and we had some success," he said. "We went to the playoffs my rookie year and made it to the NFC Championship Game. Last year, we won the division and unfortunately, got beat early in the playoffs."

Although Buffalo is off to a disappointing start in 2009, Hangartner shined in the season opener against New England on Monday Night Football. He received rave reviews for his dominating performance against the Patriots' defensive line from the broadcast booth—a rarity for an offensive lineman. Unfortunately, his impressive debut was overshadowed by a New England come-from-behind victory led by Tom Brady in the final minutes.

Still, it appears this great Aggie has found a home in Buffalo. **■**

Men's Basketball Home Schedule

Nov 5	Texas A&M-Commerce
Nov 13	Angelo State
Nov 20	Samford
Dec 2	Prairie View A&M
Dec 4	Akron
Dec 7	North Texas
Dec 19	The Citadel
Jan 2	Northwestern State
Jan 5	North Dakota
Jan 8	Nebraska 
Jan 19	Oklahoma 
Jan 23	Colorado 
Jan 30	Texas Tech 
Feb 6	Baylor 
Feb 15	Kansas 
Feb 22	Texas  <small>State Fair Lane Star Shootout</small>
Mar 3	Oklahoma State 

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Women's Basketball Home Schedule

Nov 15	Duke
Nov 18	Rice
Dec 2	Stephen F. Austin
Dec 8	North Texas
Dec 28	Prairie View A&M
Jan 4	Lamar
Jan 13	Iowa State 
Jan 23	Texas Tech 
Jan 31	Oklahoma State 
Feb 3	Missouri 
Feb 13	Kansas State 
Feb 20	Texas  <small>State Fair Lane Star Shootout</small>
Feb 22	Baylor 
Mar 2	Oklahoma 

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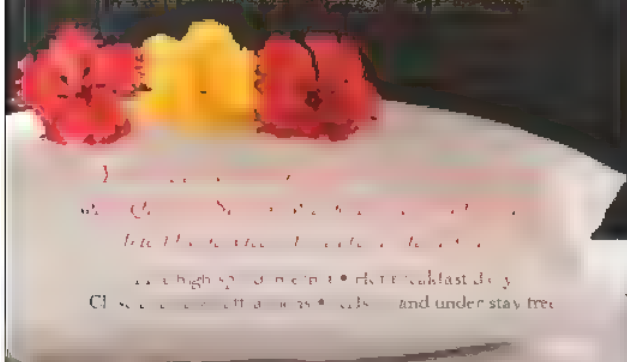
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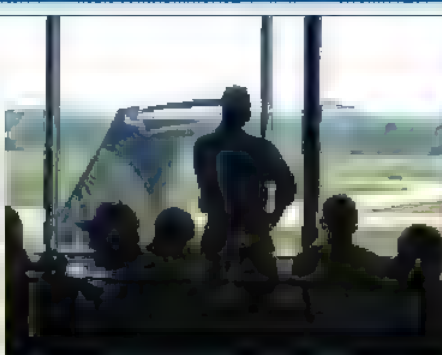


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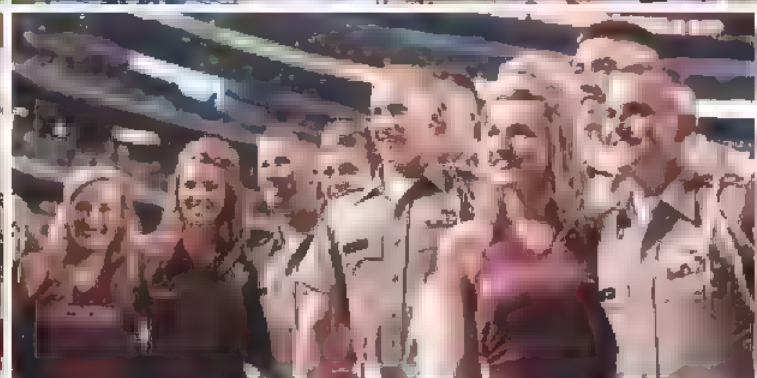


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Top 10 Moments

FROM THE INAUGURAL SOUTHWEST CLASSIC BY JEREMY KSONDA '04

1. The Atmosphere

The old Southwest Conference rivalry picked up right where it left off, as the atmosphere at Cowboys Stadium was absolutely electric when the game was close. Arkansas fans may have had a little bit more enjoyable experience at the inaugural Southwest Classic, but each season will bring new sets of expectations and circumstances that will undoubtedly provide some instant classic showdowns.

2. Stadium

You can see it on TV, read about it in the newspaper, or listen to your neighbor talk about it, but until you see "Jeryworld" in person, you really can't appreciate its magnitude. Televisions in every corner, lights illuminating every nook and cranny, and a silhouette that stretches all the way across the horizon as you're driving down Interstate 30, Mr. Jones spared no expense on the Dallas Cowboys' new home.

3. All-White Aggies

There was a buzz about the stadium as fans got their first glance of A&M's all-white look for the nationally televised matchup. To add to the excitement, the players only found out they were wearing the white helmets when they arrived in the locker room on game day. It was the first time the Aggies donned white helmets since 1978.

4. No Boundaries

One of the perks of a press pass is that you receive access to almost anywhere in the building. Typically things are too hectic to go anywhere other than from point A to point B, but slow-moving elevators caused us to find alternate routes. While we may not have been able to enjoy the endless amenities of all the suite levels, just passing through was an experience in and of itself.

5. One of a Kind

Just before kickoff, a few of the Arkansas dance team members made the way over to meet the yell leaders and stood in front of the Aggie Band and the rest of the A&M section. As the 12th Man began to pass back signals to the top of the stadium and yell "BTHO Arkansas," the dance team couldn't hide their awe of the impressive display of unity among their counterparts.

6. The DeSoto Duo

Sophomore RB Cyrus Gray and junior JACK Von Miller each wore the number 24 to honor a member of the DeSoto HS football team (their alma mater) who suffered a career-ending injury in the spring. The players honored their friend well, as Gray ripped off a long gain on the Aggies' first offensive possession, and Miller sacked Arkansas QB Ryan Mallett on the first defensive possession.

7. The 12th Man...With A New Twist

In what could become a new tradition, four members of the Aggie student body won the chance to experience what it's like to be part of the Aggie football team. The students traveled and stayed with the team and participated in everything they did for the Southwest Classic. While they weren't in full uniforms, they even got to stand on the sideline in No. 12 jerseys during the game—ready to play if called upon.

8. Macaroni Bar

Alright, we had to mention it. The new Cowboys Stadium might not have EVERYTHING, but they've certainly come close. If you've got a hankering for something other than typical stadium food, you might want to check out the Macaroni Bar located on the Ring of Honor level. It's Macaroni and Cheese however you want it, and it will only cost you \$10.

9. Cowboys Stadium Staff

We're not sure if the stadium had more televisions or staff members, but each was informative and helpful. If you're not sure where to go (and you won't be, because the place is absolutely massive), just ask one of the friendly staff members and they'll quickly point you in the right direction.

10. Friday Golf

The Northeast Tarrant County Aggie Mom's Club puts on an annual golf tournament fundraiser, and this year's competition just so happened to coincide with the Southwest Classic. We had the opportunity to participate in this year's tourney, and would highly recommend making it part of your weekend plans if you decide to take in next year's festivities. Beautiful course, friendly people, and an outstanding cause all rolled into one. Thanks, NE Tarrant County Aggie Mom's Club. And just for the record, they do give prizes to the team that finishes in last place. **GI**

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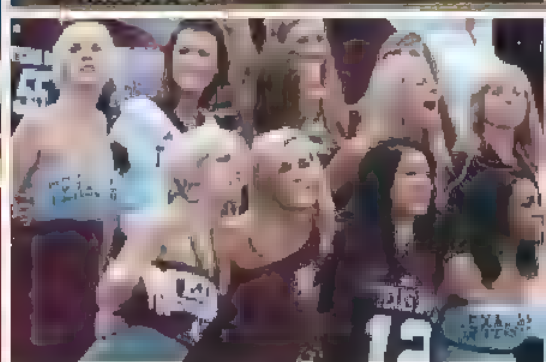


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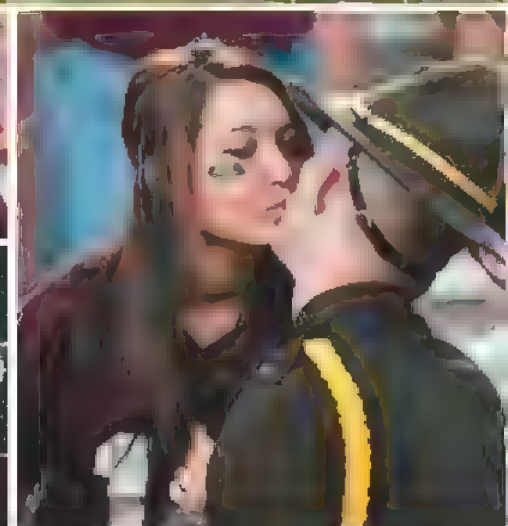
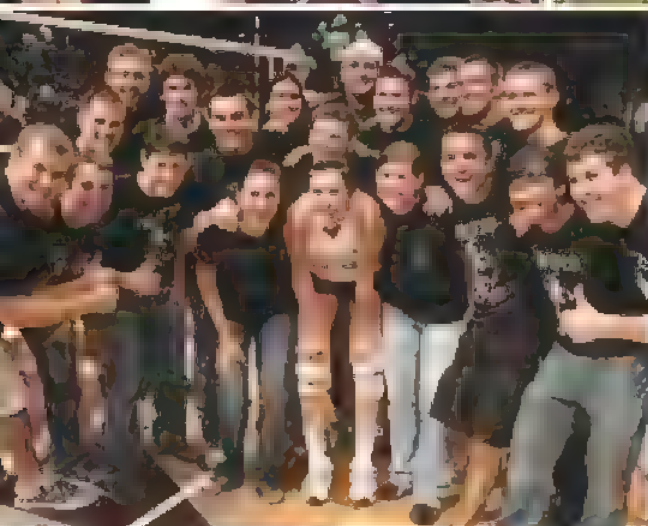
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(above) The yell leaders during the national anthem. (top right) Unfortunately, the soccer team was outscored by Purdue. (right) Members of the 12th Man at the New Mexico football game. (below left and bottom) The 12th Man celebrates the volleyball team's upset victory over No. 9 Nebraska and the Batis Boys pose with their hero, Mary Batis. (below right) Fish corps members tackle the yell leaders after the win over New Mexico. (below middle) Quentia Coryatt was one of six A&M athletic greats to be inducted into the Lettermen's Association Hall of Fame at the Burgess Banquet. (bottom middle) Fan Monika McCown throws T-shirt to the crowd. (bottom right) It's always good when the Ags score.





BRITTANY KOEHL '12 >> AGGIE HOSTESS
COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR >> MIDLAND TX



In 10 years I'll likely be a mom and a wife

Why I love A&M: The traditions and the family atmosphere

Favorite tradition: I would say standing at games, but we get to sit! I love all of the game day traditions

Movies I can't live without: Braveheart, Titanic and Troy

Music I can't live without: Britney Spears really love her. She is the bomb!

Worst job I have had: Dog sitting when it is raining and the dogs are really scared

I came to Texas A&M because my sister came here and there was really nowhere else to go. I didn't want to go to Texas Tech - that is like 13th grade for Midland High. I didn't want to go to TU - it is too much of a party school.

When I was little, I wanted to be a cowgirl. I thought it would be fun to be on a ranch and take care of horses. I am a little obsessed with horses. If I was in the Corps, I would definitely want to be in the Parson's Mounted Cavalry.

The best part about being a hostess is the nice meals we get before games. We love stuffing our faces! And we get to sit in some good seats too.

Talent I would most like to have: Playing the piano.

Besides the Aggies, my favorite sports team is the Dallas Cowboys.

I like to spend my weekends relaxing, eating and hanging out with friends.

Dream date: Something original that he sets up while trying to figure out what I would like.

Attribute you like the best about yourself: I'm always happy.

Attribute you like the least about yourself: Sometimes I can have a quick temper, but I just have to take a deep breath, think about things in the big perspective and I'm alright.

If I had more time I would travel all over the world. I've wanted to go to Europe for a long time. I love going to the beach too.

Favorite food: Mexican! Lasagna is a close second.

Five people I would like to have dinner with: Jesus, George Bush (both 41 and 43), Laura Bush and Britney Spears. That's an interesting combination.

Pet peeve: When people swallow really loud.

If I could have a superpower, it would be to be anywhere I wanted at any time. Being invisible would be cool too.

If I won the lottery, the first thing I'd buy is a lake house for my family on Lake LBJ. **ATI**

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AN AGGIE FROM THE START

BY KATIE MCCONNELL '09

Jason Bienski is a fourth generation life-long resident of Brazos County. As a multi-generation Aggie, the Spirit of Aggieland was ingrained in him at an early age.

Bienski witnessed first-hand the unique bond that Aggies shared with one another. His father, Pete Bienski Jr., Class of 1968, had a knack for striking up conversations with complete strangers, simply because of the Aggie ring on their finger. He soon realized the impact that being an Aggie could have.

The decision to follow in his family's footsteps was easy, and Texas A&M was his only collegiate choice.

"My father told me that I could go to any college I wanted," Bienski recalled, "but he was only going to help pay for A&M."

One thing was for certain – he wanted to be an Aggie.

"I didn't necessarily know what I wanted to do in college, but I knew I wanted that Aggie ring," he said.

After graduating from Bryan High in 1988, Bienski went on to get his degree (and his ring) from Texas A&M in 1992. After a slight detour to the University of Oklahoma to obtain a three year advanced degree in economic development, Bienski remained in Aggieland.

With a degree in political science and a minor in business management, Bienski had experience in college working for places like Epicures Catering and Tanner Dairy Queens and dabbled in political races and contemplated the funeral home business with his father. He even considered starting his own catering business. But, it wasn't until after prodding from a friend that he began looking into real estate.

"I was living at home at the time and I had a friend tell me I needed to get out on my own or I'd never find a wife," he recalls. "He convinced me to buy a duplex – it wasn't the greatest duplex – but I moved into one side and rented the other side to pay the mortgage. I was hooked."


He took pleasure in knowing that he helped provide a secure foundation for another family – and a roof over their head. Real estate became a family affair after Bienski met and married his wife, Tasha, and she began helping with the business along with several of his brothers.

Today, Bienski is a Realtor for Brazos Land Realty and Properties and owns several real estate and investment companies. He & Tasha have two adorable daughters – Becca (age 7) and Bryn (age 5). With more than 18 years of real estate experience, he specializes in residential, investment, rural and commercial properties in the Brazos Valley.



"I didn't necessarily know what I wanted to do in college, but I knew I wanted that Aggie ring."

While he continues to help families find homes, Bienski is also committed to community service. He has served on dozens of boards for local organizations as well as the Economic Development Director for the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, helping to recruit new businesses to a seven county region. Since 2005, he has also served on the Bryan City Council, where he has served as the Mayor Pro Tem for the past three years.

Family – whether it's his own or one he just met in search of a new home – is the force that drives Bienski, and that is a recipe for success both personally and professionally. 



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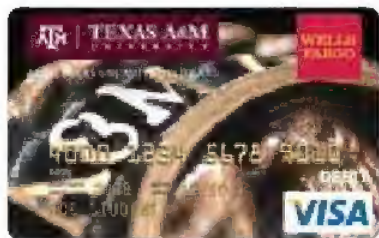
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